

# Vermont Agency of Human Services

## *Actions, Hurrahs, and Successes*

[www.ahs.state.vt.us](http://www.ahs.state.vt.us)

Waterbury, Vermont 05671

August 2005

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### **Message from the Secretary**

Recently I shared with all Agency staff members the preliminary results of our Staff Satisfaction Survey (see the Survey item below). In my email about the survey I made a statement that I've repeated often over the past few weeks. It means a great deal to me, personally and professionally, and it is worth repeating here: From my district office visits and interactions with staff here in Waterbury, I have discovered that we do a thousand great things every day. I am truly amazed and proud of all AHS staff and our community partners for what you do for the people of Vermont. Thank you all for your commitment and dedication to the individuals and families we serve!

*~ Michael K. Smith, Secretary*

### **Burlington District Names Assistant Field Director**

Burlington's AHS Field Director Jane Helmstetter announced that Mark Schroeter, MSW, has accepted the position of Assistant Field Director for the Burlington District AHS Office. He will be transitioning from his current position as District Manager for the Economic Services Division for the Department for Children and Families within the very near future. Many folks know Mark from the various positions he has held with the State of Vermont since 1978 or through his outstanding community work. He has been involved with the AHS reorganization process from the start and brings both a historical perspective as well as a forward-thinking approach to the challenging work ahead. Mark can be reached via email at: [marks@wpgate1.ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:marks@wpgate1.ahs.state.vt.us) Please join Jane in welcoming Mark to this new position.

### **Winter Arrives in DCF Fuel Assistance Office!**

A blizzard of applications for help with winter heating bills has stormed into the Fuel Assistance Office of DCF's Economic Services Division. The Fuel Office began accepting applications on July 15 after mailing over 29,000 application packets to potentially eligible Vermonters. With high fuel prices it is no surprise that 1,100 more applications were received by August 1 of this year as compared to 2004. Last winter over 26,300 applications for assistance were processed, and over \$12.6 million in benefits were distributed to over 19,300 households. For more information about this program or call them toll-free and speak with one of the Fuel Program Specialists at 1-800-479-6151 or visit the Fuel Office website at [http://www.dsw.state.vt.us/Programs\\_Pages/Fuel/fuel.shtml](http://www.dsw.state.vt.us/Programs_Pages/Fuel/fuel.shtml)

## Staff Satisfaction Survey – Preliminary Data

AHS Secretary Michael K. Smith advised all Agency staff on July 22<sup>nd</sup> ... "As you know, we have embarked on an unprecedented way to measure our agency's performance. Soon after my arrival, we began to survey consumers to ascertain how we are doing as an agency in meeting the needs of Vermonters, and how effectively we are delivering our services. We will have these results later this fall. In addition, we wanted to make sure we understood the needs of our employees. This is the first time in state history an agency has done such an extensive staff satisfaction analysis, hearing from 1,600 staff members across all AHS regions and divisions, about half of our workforce."

"We have recently received preliminary data from the UVM Research Team we partnered with to conduct the staff satisfaction survey. This data is still incomplete, and represents general employee responses to the survey questions. While it is interesting to see how AHS staff feel as a whole, the data will be much more meaningful once we have it broken down across departments, divisions, and locations. We also don't have the analysis of the qualitative, open-ended survey items, which will add rich, complementary and substantive narrative detail to the statistical portrait. I thought it was important however, to share the results that I have with all of you. As soon as we have complete data, I will ask departments and divisions to engage in action planning to ensure that, together, we address areas of concern."

The data is available through the following link:

[https://www.ahsnet.ahs.state.vt.us/Council/Docs/AHS wide Responses072205\\_1.pdf](https://www.ahsnet.ahs.state.vt.us/Council/Docs/AHS%20wide%20Responses072205_1.pdf)

Final results will be published in the fall of 2005. For more information contact Susan Besio, AHS Planning Director, at: [susanb@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:susanb@ahs.state.vt.us)

## Governor's Commission on Health & Aging

Vermont is considered an "aging state," where the older population is growing faster than the younger population. Poor mental and physical health is not a normal part of aging, but over 88% of Vermonters over age 65 have one or more chronic conditions. Increasing physical activity, staying engaged in one's community and adopting healthy nutritional practices can provide Vermonters with healthy aging experiences. The Governor's Commission on Healthy Aging will recommend ways that state government can reach out to communities and the private sector, as well as to agencies that provide services, to help make healthy aging a common theme for Vermont's seniors. For more information, please contact Joan Senecal at [joan.senecal@vail.state.vt.us](mailto:joan.senecal@vail.state.vt.us) in Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living.

## Assistance for Guard Members and their Families

Many Vermonters have friends, family, or neighbors who are serving overseas or in locations away from home as part of deployments in service to the country through the National Guard. If you are a state employee or a local service provider and are working with a National Guard member or with their family and have questions regarding available support services, contact your local Vermont Guard Family Resource Center Representative:

Mary Blow, Camp Johnson Colchester: 338-3076

Wayne Boyce, Lyndonville: 626-3451

Joyce Cloutier, Montpelier: 223-2975

Heather Hinckley Rutland: 775-0194

Michael Bourgeois Swanton: 868-7927

Family Readiness Center - Statewide: 888-607-8773

Or visit their website: <http://www.vtguard.com/FamilyReadiness/FAC.htm>

## Beyond the Boxes of Re-organization:

### Transforming Human Services - Professional Development

To move AHS beyond the boxes of re-organization, "*Workforce Development*" is a key component of the Agency's Strategic Plan. It calls for continuous improvement and accountability of the Agency's performance in service to Vermonters. As defined in the strategic plan, our "workforce" includes AHS staff and the staff of our contracted partners.

To provide Vermont's human services workforce with professional development opportunities, the Agency is embarking on a workforce initiative:

***"Transforming Human Services - Cross System and Community Professional Development."*** A diverse group of individuals are working on this initiative through the Professional Development Group (PDG). They drafted the current document outlining key components of this initiative. Please take a look at:

<https://www.ahsnet.ahs.state.vt.us/Council/Docs/TranformingHS.DOC>

A Curriculum Development Team, a sub-group of the PDG, is now working to craft the content and delivery of a professional development curriculum that will support the Agency's transformation. For more information, contact Joe Patrissi, Senior Field Services Manager, at [joe.patrissi@dcf.state.vt.us](mailto:joe.patrissi@dcf.state.vt.us)

Wish to dive deeper into the AHS Strategic Plan? Go to:  
[https://www.ahsnet.ahs.state.vt.us/Council/Strategic\\_plan.cfm](https://www.ahsnet.ahs.state.vt.us/Council/Strategic_plan.cfm)

## **Consumer Satisfaction Survey - 92% Response Rate**

As part of an effort to evaluate how we're doing according to our consumers, AHS Planning Division has been working with the University of Vermont to design and implement a telephone survey to assess consumer satisfaction with AHS services and supports. The telephone survey was piloted with about 15 consumers prior to implementation, and the questions were also reviewed by the AHS Customer Satisfaction Team.

The full telephone survey was implemented on June 15, 2005 and concluded on July 19, 2005. Participants were randomly selected to ensure balanced and unbiased feedback. They were all identified as having received a service or support from AHS within the past year. Prior to the call, all potential respondents were mailed a letter from the Secretary of AHS and the UVM Research Team explaining the study, asking for their participation, and giving them an opportunity to decline. In total, 2,298 individuals completed the 10 -15 minute telephone survey and only 206 individuals chose not to participate (a 92% response rate). The results of the survey will be available in late fall. For more information contact Susan Besio, AHS Planning Director, at: [susanb@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:susanb@ahs.state.vt.us)

## **Quality Assurance Measures for Medicaid Long-Term Care**

The Economic Services Division (ESD) in the Department for Children and Families received funding in the SFY06 budget to hire four quality assurance specialists for Medicaid Long-term Care (LTC) eligibility determination. These positions are currently in the recruitment and hiring process. The QA specialists will review a sample of LTC case decisions each month to ensure accuracy and consistency according to LTC rules, and to identify staff needs to improve service. This effort is part of a larger initiative, which involves ESD as well as DAIL and OVHA. Other aspects of this initiative include rule changes to close asset-sheltering loopholes, an improved process for collecting the patient's share of the LTC costs, and an evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of increasing estate recovery efforts for LTC beneficiaries. Please contact Economic Services Deputy Commissioner Betsy Forrest at [betsyf@path.state.vt.us](mailto:betsyf@path.state.vt.us) for more information.

## **Walk for Children - Montpelier Saturday August 20th**

Prevent Child Abuse Vermont (PCAV) presents the *2005 Walk for Children*. PCAV's mission is to eliminate child abuse by promoting healthy relationships between children and the people who care for them through programs that provide support, information, and referrals. Join the fundraising *2005 Walk for Children* on the State House lawn in Montpelier on Saturday August 20<sup>th</sup>. For more information, contact PCAV at 1-800-CHILDREN or go online at [www.pcavt.org](http://www.pcavt.org)

## **Developmental Services – State System of Care Plan Update**

The Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL) released the VT State System of Care Plan for Developmental Services FY 2006 Update. The plan describes the nature, extent, allocation and timing of services provided to people with developmental disabilities and their families. It outlines the criteria for individuals to obtain services and funding, including priorities to develop new, and continue current, services and programs.

Information was gathered from a wide range of individuals, including people with disabilities, their families, advocates and services providers. The plan reflects the Division of Disability and Aging Services' commitment to the well-being of people with disabilities and the use of resources to achieve personal and system outcomes consistent with AHS outcomes for Vermont citizens. The report and the Plan Update are on the DAIL website at:

<http://www.dail.state.vt.us/WhatsNew/CarePlan06Update.pdf> For more information, contact June Bascom, Policy Analyst, Division of Disability and Aging Services, at: [june.bascom@dail.state.vt.us](mailto:june.bascom@dail.state.vt.us)

## **Methamphetamine Information Sessions for Community Professionals**

The Departments of Health (VDH) and Public Safety are presenting Methamphetamine Informational Sessions in each of the state's 12 districts. These 2-hour workshops are designed for community professionals and not intended for the general public. Sessions begin at 2:30 pm and are repeated at 6:30 pm. Upcoming sessions are scheduled for: Rutland, August 24 and Barre, September 7. A complete schedule is posted on the VT Criminal Justice Training Council website <http://www.vcjtc.state.vt.us/meth.htm> For more information contact Suzie Wilson, Training Chief in the Department of Health's Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, at [swilson@vdh.state.vt.us](mailto:swilson@vdh.state.vt.us) or at 802-651-1568.

## **Trauma Informed Workshop**

The Department of Corrections and the Agency's Human Resource Development Unit continue to sponsor one-day, no-cost workshops for human service professionals to become trauma-informed. Each workshop has been over-subscribed, and additional sessions have been scheduled. The next workshop is September 26<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 am - 4 pm in Waterbury. To register contact Jennifer Sprafke 241-3956 in the Department of Corrections at: [jsprafke@doc.state.vt.us](mailto:jsprafke@doc.state.vt.us)



## Swing a Club for Scholarships

The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Tournament for Teens at the Vermont National Country Club in South Burlington will be held on September 19, 2005. Proceeds go to the **Vermont Foster/Adoptive Family Association (VFAFA)** to provide scholarships to support youth who have been in foster care. More than \$40,000 in scholarship money has been awarded throughout the years. For more information, contact Linda Snider at [dsls@gmavt.net](mailto:dsls@gmavt.net)

## Discover Stuff – Visit Our Web Sites

AHS staff and community service professionals marvel at the information found on Agency web sites. Take a look for yourself at:

Agency of Human Services: [www.ahs.state.vt.us](http://www.ahs.state.vt.us)

Health Department: [www.healthyvermonters.info](http://www.healthyvermonters.info)

Disabilities, Aging, & Independent Living: [www.dad.state.vt.us](http://www.dad.state.vt.us)

Corrections: [www.doc.state.vt.us](http://www.doc.state.vt.us)

Children and Families: [www.dcf.state.vt.us](http://www.dcf.state.vt.us)

Office of Vermont Health Access: [www.ovha.state.vt.us](http://www.ovha.state.vt.us)

## Suggestions Invited for Future AHS Updates

Community partners and agency staff are invited to make suggestions for items to be included in future editions of the Agency's update **Actions, Hurrahs, and Successes**. If you have information about a project, new initiative, or successes you think would be worth sharing, please email your suggestions to Richard Moffi, in the Secretary's Office at [richardm@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:richardm@ahs.state.vt.us)

FYI: You can find this and previous editions of **Actions, Hurrahs, and Successes** on the Agency of Human Services website at: [www.ahs.state.vt.us](http://www.ahs.state.vt.us)

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